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SBA

Business Basics

Recruiting and Selecting Employees

A Self-Instructional Booklet
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GUIDESHEET

RECRUITING AND SELECTING EMPLOYEES

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is part of a series intended to help small businesspeople increase their knowledge of, and skills in, various aspects of business management. Other booklets in the series may be obtained from the nearest Small Business Administration field office.

Recruiting and Selecting Employees looks at methods of seeking out and choosing competent employees. It covers the following topics:

- methods of recruiting potential employees
- screening and selecting the best candidate
- complying with Equal Employment Opportunity Laws
- conducting an effective interview
- checking references

As a result of completing this booklet, the small businessperson should:

1. Be more cognizant of the methods available for recruiting candidates for his or her business.

2. Become more aware of the laws governing fair employment.

3. Develop better skills for conducting a carefully planned interview in which he or she can determine whether the candidate possesses appropriate abilities for the position.

4. Be able to make hiring decisions based upon objective criteria.

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Jim Brockner, the owner of a small printing business, was very disappointed with the new cameraman he hired. "Why, with the qualifications and experience this guy has, he ought to be able to practically manage my business. Yet, he has been working so slow and has been making so many mistakes in the darkroom, that I don't know whether I can keep him on much longer. What is wrong with people nowadays?"

On the other side of town, the manager of a sporting goods store was also wondering about today's people. "This new youngster I hired never comes to work on time and is loafing on the job already. What's more, she hardly knows how to greet customers and thank them when they buy. Don't they teach kids anything in school these days?"

One of the problems these two business owners may have in common is a certain weakness in their ability to recruit and select good employees.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

This particular booklet is designed to help you find and select better employees and will cover various methods you can use to:

1. search for people who might be suited to your business

2. interview them to see whether they have the knowledge, the skills, and the abilities your business needs, and then to

3. decide which of the applicants you have seen is most likely to perform well for you

FORMAT

The information in this booklet is presented in a unique way. For example, following each key thought will be a question or series of questions to which you will be asked to respond. These questions will require you to restate the key points described in the paragraphs immediately preceding the question. In each case, you should write a few notes on how you would respond to the question directly on the page in the space provided so you will have it as

a permanent record for review. NO NEED TO WRITE COMPLETE SENTENCES - just a few words to indicate your thoughts. A good answer to each question will be given in the box on the first even numbered page which follows the question. Your answers need not match the booklet answers exactly.

It will, of course, do you little good to look ahead at the answers before writing out your own. The whole purpose of this type of learning format is to give you a chance to see whether you clearly understand and remember the information by writing it out before you check the answer.

In addition to the questions, you will be as asked to work on several on-the-job activities. These will be brief suggested assignments which will give you a chance to apply one or several of the concepts discussed in the booklet to actual work situations in your own firm. If possible, you should discuss these assignments with someone whom you consider knowledgeable in personnel work so you can benefit from any ideas which come up.

It is important to note here that this booklet is not intended to provide you with exhaustive information on this topic. Nor is it designed to tell you how to run your business. Rather, the booklet is intended only to increase your knowledge and skills by reviewing some basic practices that are appropriate for use in small firms. They can easily be modified to best serve the needs of your own firm.

INTRODUCTION

Selection of competent employees is one of the most important things you can do. Able people can be trained easily; they are reliable and motivated; and, if treated properly, they are loyal. Over the long run there is nothing which contributes as extensively to profits as competent people.

The steps a manager must take to recruit and select competent employees include:

- advertising or otherwise searching for good candidates
- reading applications and resumes
- planning the interview
- interviewing prospects
- checking references
- selecting candidates for second interview
- planning and conducting second interviews
- selecting the best candidate

RECRUITING

Knowing What you are Looking For

You should have a fairly clear idea of exactly what position you are hiring for and the skills which are required, before you begin the search. It will be helpful, both to you and to the people who are looking for jobs, if you are able to specify exactly the type of position you wish to fill.

With a detailed knowledge of the skills which are required for the position, you can set minimum standards to suit your business and communicate these standards to your employees, friends, and agencies who might help you recruit. A brief job description, if you have one, is often very helpful as well*.

If this way, you can easily answer inquiries concerning the position and you are saved the trouble of interviewing applicants who do not meet minimum standards for the job.

Finding Creative Ways to Attract Candidates

When a lot of people with the skills you need are looking for work, recruiting is an easy task. Even the selection is easier because there is a wider pool from which to draw.

Most businesses, however, are in labor markets where only a limited number of qualified candidates are available. And to make matters worse, limit themsleves in the way they look for candidates. As a result, they often have to select from a very small list of candidates, none of whom appear to be properly qualified.

Recruiting, therefore, means finding creative ways to use all potential sources for bringing in applicants that are appropriate for the respective position.

Some businesses restrict themselves to advertising in the local newspapers - listing the primary job title. Others use only employment agencies to help fill their needs.

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*Suggestions for preparing job descriptions are covered in the booklet Basic Personnel Management Tools.

1. *There are many other ways to attract prospective candidates. Below is a list of a few such possibilities. In the blank space following the list add several other possible ways to let potential applicants know about an opening that you may have.*

   - *advertising in newspapers under one or several job titles*
   - *asking employees to refer individuals who might be interested and qualified*
   - *recruiting through a local radio station*
   - *posting literature on bulletin boards in local college guidance offices*
   - *recruiting through counsellors at the high school*

   Your Answer: (Remember, in this question, as well as in future ones, there is no need to write complete sentences - just key words on how you are answering the question. A good answer is on page 6.)

Selecting the Right Recruiting Methods

Clearly, the recruiting methods you should use depend upon the type of employee you seek and how hard you want to search for the very best available candidate.

Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Some may be very time consuming, such as direct newspaper ads which require screening of all who apply, or notices on college bulletin boards which may be very slow in bringing in an adequate number of applicants. Others can be fairly costly, such as employment agencies where competent applicants often expect the firm to pick up the fee. Some can be used concurrently, while it would be inefficient to use others in such a way. If you use an employment agency, for instance, you would not want to run your own ads in a local paper at the same time. An employment agency is not likely to pay much attention to your position if it knows that you are competing with it in the labor market, and that the chances are slim of placing somebody with you. If you are prepared to pay an employment agency to save you the time of screening applicants yourself, it pays to let the agency handle the job alone.

On the other hand, ads in the local newspaper, notices on college bulletin boards, and letting acquaintances in the community know about your needs, are all compatible with each other and are likely to bring in a larger number of candidates than any one of these used alone.

2. *To review some of the advantages and disadvantages of the various recruiting methods, take a moment to write out what you consider to be the advantages and the disadvantages of:*

   - *recruiting with local newspaper ads and*
   - *recruiting through notifying employees of the opening and asking their help in finding candidates*

   Your Answer:

Sometimes the disadvantages of a recruiting method are not as serious as first appears. For instance, the major disadvantage of using an employment agency is the relatively high cost involved, if the company has to assume the fee.

READEX FICHE

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Book Answer

1. Some other possible ways to let potential applicants know about an opening you may have, are:

- *recruiting through an employment agency*
- *recruiting through the local Chamber of Commerce*
- *advertising in local magazines*
- *advertising in the specialized magazines and journals of your trade*
- *informing friends and acquaintances from clubs or social activities, of the position*
- *asking business associates to refer individuals who might be interested and qualified*
- *recruiting through state employment service*
- *recruiting through CETA and county agencies*
- *stealing employees from competition*
- *recruiting through specialized trade schools*
- *advertising in local "shopper" type newspapers*

However, if the agreement with the agency is drawn up so that the agency will search for another candidate if the first or second one does not succeed, and if the agency is reliable, then the investment may well be worthwhile. Costs of screening applicants can be high if the position requires difficult-to-find abilities. Often the people in agencies are better qualified to do such initial screening and have better access to potential candidates through their wider contacts with other business people.

Following Up on Your Recruiting Practices

It is useful to review your recruiting practices from time to time to see where they can be improved. You may wish to simply note what brought success, as well as the methods which did not seem to work well. For example, it may turn out that your employees have often been able to refer better applicants to you than the employment agencies you have worked with. Or, it could be that advertising in the local newspaper seems to bring you better applicants than posting notices on college bulletin boards.

Where friends, business people, school officials, or others have helped you by sending you candidates, it is a good idea to provide small gifts or otherwise thank them for their thoughtfulness so that they will be aware that you appreciate their help.

2. *Table listing some advantages and disadvantages of recruiting through newspapers versus recruiting through employees.*

Recruitment Method

	Newspaper Ads	*Seeking Help From Employees*
ADVANTAGES	*Reaches a wide and diverse population.*	*Employees may save you time in screening applicants if they are well aware of the type of person needed for the job.* *It is often healthy for employee morale if friends or relatives of employees are working together. Employee self-esteem is raised by letting employees know you are confident in them to recommend competent job prospects.* *Your employees can provide you with personal information about the applicant.*
DISADVANTAGES	*Requires checking references and in-depth interviewing.* *May waste much time in screening the many applicants who apply.* *NOTE: This time cost of screening may be greatly reduced if you have a good screening procedure laid out and if a secretary or someone is able to pre-screen for you by eliminating applicants who do not meet the minimum specifications you have set.*	*Limited to employees' acquaintances.* *Employees may feel offended or threatened if the people they recommend are not hired.* *If relatives or friends are hired, and problems develop with these people the problem is likely to be compounded due to kinship or friendship ties to other employees.*

SUMMARY/CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING AND IMPROVING RECRUITING PRACTICES

Know the job and the skills required for the job, and the kind of person you are looking for (A job description and job specification can help you here).

Insure that the people who answer the telephone have an adequate description of the job so that they can answer inquiries without referring them to you.

Give a brief job description to employees, school personnel, and business people you know to help you with recruiting so they can inform prospective applicants of the specific nature of the position you want to fill.

Set minimum standards for applicants so that others can screen inquiries for you.

Use all potential sources for bringing in applicants that are appropriate for the respective positions.

Run an ad under several different headings or titles whenever an initial ad does not supply an adequate number of qualified applicants.

Visit employment agencies to see the quality of screening personnel they use and ask them to visit with you to show them your operation so they understand your needs more clearly.

Conduct a follow-up of your recruiting practices from time to time.

Review, from time to time, what attempts brought you good quality candidates and what attempts were less successful.

Review periodically, how successful various types of applicants are.

Thank those employees, business people, school officials, or others who have helped by sending you candidates.

Review, from time to time, the cost of your recruiting practices in terms of actual money spent, time used by others, and your own time.

Try different approaches if you find that your recruiting cost is high.

Review the list of suggestions on page 8 and in the blank space below, add any other useful suggestions you may have.

ON-THE-JOB ACTIVITY 1

Use the "Recruiting Practices" Checklist to review the procedures you used in recruiting for the last position you filled, and decide what else you might want to do, or what you might want to do differently the next time you have a job opening. (Enter your notes in the blank spaces below so that you will remember them when the occasion arises.)

If possible, discuss your thoughts with a person whose opinion you respect and see what additional ideas come from such a discussion.

SELECTION

After recruiting a number of job candidates, you have to weed out the unqualified ones and then select the best remaining candidate for the job. Your main tools will be the kinds of questions you can ask. Answers to some of your questions may be obtained through a job application form and resume, but by far the most informative answers come from a job interview.

Preliminary Screening of Applicants

Preliminary selection of applicants can often be done by setting minimum standards for the job, and communicating these standards to your friends, employees, and agencies who help you recruit. In this way, a secretary or another employee can answer telephone inquiries and respond to job resumes, and screen out obviously unacceptable job candidates who do not meet the minimum standards set for the job. Such a procedure frees you to attend to more important activities, and often allows for reviewing a greater number of applicants than would otherwise be possible for one person to handle.

If the position is important, it is often wise to ask applicants to first send resumes before you begin scheduling appointments for interviews. This has two advantages:

1. Reviewing resumes will enable you to screen out some unacceptable job candidates. You can also assign priorities to the resumes so you will see the most promising candidates first. In this way, you will run less risk of losing the best ones to job openings in other firms while you go through your selection procedure.

2. When you do decide to interview a candidate, you will already have some background information on the person from the resume and thus will be able to ask better questions and conduct a better interview.

The questions you ask of candidates should help you determine whether the applicant will:

- stay on the job
- be satisfied in the position that you have open or in positions to which he or she might be able to rise
- get along well with others
- be reliable

When you try to obtain answers to these questions, you must keep the laws of the land in mind.

Questions about the applicant which have little or no bearing to the job are often considered to be discriminatory in nature. That is, the applicant may gain the impression that your decision to hire is based on something other than her or his ability to perform on the job. If this is in fact the case, you may be breaking one or several of the equal employment opportunity laws, and be sued for damages. These laws are briefly described below.

Equal Employment Opportunity Laws

Equal employment opportunity laws state that you may not discriminate against an applicant on the basis of the applicant's race, religion, sex, national origin, or age.

Equal Pay Act of 1963 - prohibits employers from paying lower wages to an employee involved in producing, buying or selling goods, because of the sex of the employee.

Basically, the act makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees on the basis of sex by paying lower wages to employees of one sex who, within the same establishment, perform equal work on a job requiring equal skill, effort and responsibility and who are performing under similar working conditions, except where payment is based on:

1. a seniority system
2. a merit system
3. a system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production
4. a differential based on any factor other than sex

Title VII: Civil Rights Act of 1964 - is intended to eliminate any form of discrimination in employment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Specifically, Title VII states that "it shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer:

1. to fail or refuse to hire, or to discharge any individual or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

2. to limit, segregate or classify employees (or applicants for employment) in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his or her status as an employee because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin."

(Title VII is administered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, EEOC, which is an independent agency of the Federal Government.)

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 - gives the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission the authority to file suits in federal courts against violators of the Civil Rights Act.

The 1972 amendment also extends the coverage of the Title VII Act to employment relationships in most government agencies and states that employers who follow federally approved affirmative action plans for 12 months, cannot be denied or suspended from a government contract without a special hearing.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, against individuals who are between the ages of 40 and 64 inclusive, with the exception of cases in which age is a bonafide occupational qualification. For example, certain federal, statutory or regulatory requirements impose compulsory age limitations on a few occupations for the safety of the public. Other situations, such as those requiring actors for youthful or elderly roles, or persons used to advertise or promote products aimed toward a youthful or elderly clientele, simply cannot always be fulfilled by individuals other than those in the appropriate age range.

In addition to these federal laws, there are many state laws which are intended to accomplish essentially the same purpose.

HOW TO BE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

To employ fairly, you do not have to remember a lot of rules of what you can and cannot do as long as you keep one basic rule in mind: the questions you ask and any tests that you administer must be relevant to the work for which the applicant is applying. The interview and application form must concern matters that distinguish between those people who will perform better on the job and those who will not. And remember that, although you may not intend to discriminate, if you ask the wrong questions, you may cause an applicant to believe that you are prejudiced, and the applicant may file a complaint against you. If you are found guilty of discrimination, the size of your business is no defense. Even the smallest firm may be sued.

It therefore pays to be careful with interview questions and to use a good application form.

3. *Consider the types of questions below, some of which frequently appear on application forms, and judge whether or not they are appropriate to ask of a job candidate during an interview. Indicate your choice by placing a check next to all appropriate questions.*

___ *Height*
___ *Weight*
___ *Age*
___ *Marital Status*
___ *Maiden Name (if applicable)*
___ *Please name three references we may call on who are familiar with your abilities:*
___ *List the names of dependent children under the age of 18:*
___ *Religious denomination*
___ *Place of birth*
___ *List your past working experience and the reasons you left each position*
___ *Are you a United States citizen?*
___ *Are you available for Saturday or Sunday work?*
___ *List of organizations, clubs, societies to which you belong:*
___ *Please attach a photograph (optional)*
___ *Spouse's occupation*
___ *Do you own your own home or other (specify)?*
___ *What is the lowest salary you would accept?*
___ *What foreign language(s) do you speak, read, or write?*
___ *Have you ever had your wages or salary garnished or assigned?*
___ *What arrangements have you made for the care of dependent children?*
___ *Have you ever been arrested for a crime? If so, please state when and the reason for the arrest.*

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Book Answer

3. *How many questions did you find were discriminatory in nature? Three questions? Five questions? The questions which are <u>not</u> discriminatory in nature are checked below:*

___ *Height*
___ *Weight*
___ *Age*
___ *Marital Status*
___ *Maiden Name (if applicable)*
✓ *Please name three references we may call on who are familiar with your abilities:*
___ *List the names of dependent children under the age of 18:*
___ *Religious denomination*
___ *Place of birth*
✓ *List your past working experience and the reasons you left each position*
✓ *Are you a United States citizen? (This information is needed by the federal government since employers are required to secure working papers from aliens and see that they have a legal right to remain within the United States before granting them employment.)*
___ *Are you available for Saturday or Sunday work?*
___ *List of organizations, clubs, societies to which you belong:*
___ *Please attach a photograph (optional)*
___ *Spouse's occupation*
___ *Do you own your own home or other (specify)?*
___ *What is the lowest salary you would accept?*
✓ *What foreign language(s) do you speak, read, or write? (This skill may be acquired through studying).*
___ *Have you ever had your wages or salary garnished or assigned?*
___ *What arrangements have you made for the care of dependent children?*
___ *Have you ever been arrested for a crime? If so, please state when and the reason for the arrest.*

All other questions may be taken to be discriminatory in nature, unless for some reason the information being gathered for employment was:

- *job-related*
- *an essential occupational qualification*
- *information necessary for national or state security*

For example, inquiries as to the applicant's religion would not be discriminatory should religious organizations wish to hire someone for a position requiring the same faith as that of the organization.

It is important to realize that much information which is discriminatory in a pre-employment situation, may quite often be asked after the applicant has already been hired, in a post-employment setting or on a post-employment form, for insurance purposes. Such information, however, may not be used to discriminate in promotion to better positions or in work assignment or in wage/salary decisions.

Discrimination, besides being against the law, is also poor business practice. In this day and age, it simply does not make sense to reject a well-qualified job applicant because of the applicant's race, sex, or religious beliefs. There is increasing evidence that many of the opinions which employers used to hold, that were based on race, sex, or creed, are not correct.

Women, for example, are just as punctual as male employees on the average, and are not absent more frequently than males. Nor does pregnancy bring more resignations of women than of young males who leave for other reasons. In fact, it appears that women have more stable employment records than men.

4. *What is the basic rule to follow when deciding whether a question on your pre-employment application form, or one which you want to ask during an interview, could be considered to be discriminating?*

   Your Answer:

Book Answer

4. *If it asks for information that will not help to determine a characteristic or ability of the candidate which is directly related to the job.*

SUMMARY/CHECKLIST FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The checklist below is not exhaustive but presents some categories of questions which are often taken as discriminatory in nature. Unless the information obtained from the question can be proven to be job-related, a necessary occupational qualifaction, or is information necessary to national or state security, the categories to be avoided are those concerning:

marital status

birthplace

age

religion

how or when citizenship was obtained

extra-curricular (non-professional) affiliations or memberships in organizations

wife's maiden name

applicant's maiden name

relatives*

how skill in a foreign language was acquired

arrest for a crime**

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*Questions concerning names of relatives who should be contacted in case of an emergency should be asked on a post-employment questionnaire and should be phrased in terms of who should be notified in case of an accident or emergency - without the stipulation of relative.

**It is illegal to discharge or refuse to hire an employee who answers arrest record questions falsely. You may, however, ask questions regarding whether or not a person was ever convicted of a crime.

children

physical size and weight

garnishments of wages or salaries

bond refusals

possessions such as owning a home, car, etc.

spouse's job or father's/mother's job

requesting a photograph of the applicant

ON-THE JOB ACTIVITY 2

Use the Checklist for Equal Employment Opportunity to review and revise the pre-employment application form in your own business, or to prepare one if you do not have one.

If possible, discuss your revision with a person whose opinion you respect and see what additional ideas come from such a discussion.

INTERVIEWING PROMISING APPLICANTS

After the preliminary screening, it is necessary to interview the remaining job candidates in order to select the most promising candidate.

Planning the Interview

Interviews should be planned carefully, so that they will bring as much useful information as can be obtained from the candidate.

One of the first planning steps concerns the time and location of the interview. The applicant may feel that he or she is not important to you if you are constantly being interrupted during an interview, or if other business cuts the interview short. A little peace and quiet is also important to allow the applicant to think and respond to your questions.

Before the actual interview, review the candidate's application form and/or resume. Here you decide what additional information you would like to get from the candidate. Reviewing the candidate's background against a job specification* is a quick way to check for completeness of information, and often brings to mind additional questions to ask. You might want to jot these questions down on a slip of paper or notepad to bring to the interview. Planning the interview in this manner will not only bring the information you want about a candidate, but will also help assure that you do not ask questions which were already answered on the application form.

In phrasing questions, it is important to keep the equal employment opportunity laws, discussed earlier, in mind. It is also to your

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*A job specification is a list of the qualifications required of a person to perform a job. Job specifications are covered in Basic Personnel Management Tools.

advantage to ask open questions of the applicant, such as, "Tell me more about your last job", or "Why does our job appeal to you?" Such questions, which cannot be given a simple yes or no answer, encourage the applicant to do most of the talking and usually bring out more information. Such questions can be thought of before or during an interview and will be discussed further, later in this module.

It is important to remember that during the interview, you should not be the only one asking questions. Undoubtedly, the applicant will want to know the basic facts about the job, and perhaps even question you about some of the details. It is therefore wise to be prepared to answer such questions. You should know the exact salary range, special benefits, and the overtime hours expected. Get both the pleasant and unpleasant facts so that you can inform the candidate in a realistic way. A job description can help greatly in providing the applicant with a general idea of the duties he or she will be expected to perform.*

Conducting an Effective Interview

After you have reviewed the candidate's application and/or resume, and have carefully planned the interview, it is time to conduct the interview.

The general procedure for conducting a job interview is to:

- o begin by asking very general and open questions
- o note those aspects of the candidate which you would like to know more about
- o end by asking specific and detailed questions to find these answers
- o let the applicant do most of the talking

The specific sequence of steps an interview should follow in order to be satisfactory not only for you, but also for the candidate, are:

1. Make the applicant feel comfortable and relaxed and attempt to establish a friendly, personal relationship with her or him. This can be done by offering the applicant coffee or a cigarette and by speaking about things of interest to the applicant.

   Although small talk, like the weather or a ball game, may be used to break the ice, it is usually best to discuss topics such as

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*Job descriptions are discussed in the Basic Personnel Management Tools Booklet.

school, previous jobs, and hobbies which will also provide you with some relevant information about the applicant.

2. Provide a brief description of the position. Your description of the job should include some of the benefits that the job provides, such as insurance, holidays, vacation, and possibly even advancement opportunities, as well as a brief mention of some of the problems a successful applicant is likely to face. It should not be phrased in such a way that it appears you are trying to sell the applicant on accepting the position before you even know enough about the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

3. Give the applicant an opportunity to ask questions about the company and the job. Assure her or him that such questions are welcome at any time during the interview.

4. Request that the applicant tell you something about her or himself. To start an interview this way gives you a chance to size up the applicant and, at the same time, it gives the applicant a feeling that you are very interested in and sympathetic toward her or him.

5. Review the application and:

   - o probe for the accuracy of the information the candidate provided, particularly with respect to the reasons for leaving previous positions.

   - o make sure the applicant has the necessary qualifications for the job. You may wish to check that by asking the applicant to actually do some work related to the position, e.g. draw a diagram, perform a skill, or calculate a quantity.

   - o obtain information on any specialized knowledge which may be useful to the applicant's future development in your business, or which may suggest that the applicant is overqualified for the position. Also try to determine whether the applicant has knowledge in an area which may suggest that he or she would be better suited in a different career. For example, does a person with much computer programming experience belong as an assistant manager of a sports store? Why is this individual applying for a job outside her or his field?

6. Determine whether the applicant has the personal characteristics required for the job. What are the applicant's aspirations and career goals? Is the applicant willing to accept the responsibilities of the job? Does the applicant seem emotionally stable? Does the applicant seem to demonstrate the ability to learn and develop in your business?

7. Discuss the applicant's financial needs and try to determine whether they will be adequately met. Does the applicant have a family or other dependents to support, alimony to pay, debts to repay, etc?

8. Probe for the applicant's attitude toward the position and what he or she sees as its advantages and disadvantages. This information is useful in determining how well the individual may "take to" or like the job, and maintain it as a career.

9. Take notes on all useful information which you gain from the applicant. You may also wish to jot down a few comments concerning your impression of the applicant after the interview. These notes and comments are very useful in refreshing your memory of applicants when you review your impressions to make the selection decision.

10. Make your selection decision as soon as possible after you have one or more well qualified candidates from which to choose. If you wait too long, the applicant you want may no longer be available.

It is sometimes possible to hold well qualified applicants a little longer by immediately scheduling them for a second interview.

On page 22 is a checklist of some steps that you may use prior to and during an interview.

Review this list and add any items you might want.

SUMMARY/CHECKLIST OF STEPS FOR PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

PLANNING THE INTERVIEW

Set aside an adequate amount of time and plan a convenient location for the interview to take place

Know the job and the personal qualifications in terms of knowledge and skills, which are required for the position

Carefully review the candidate's application form or resume to find out what additional information you would like to know

Make a note of the questions you wish to ask on a notepad or piece of paper

Check the questions to make sure they conformed with equal employment opportunity practices

Plan open-ended questions wherever possible in order to obtain the most information from the applicant

Know the facts about the job concerning:

_____basic job duties
_____the exact salary range
_____special benefits
_____overtime hours expected of the position

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Make the applicant feel comfortable

Provide a description of the position for which the applicant is applying

Describe both the benefits and opportunities of the job, as well as any drawbacks and problems which may exist

Give the applicant a chance to ask questions

- Let the applicant do most of the talking, while you listen and guide the conversation with open questions
- Request that the applicant tell you something about her or himself

Review the applicant's application and:

- probe the accuracy of information on the application, particularly with respect to the reasons for leaving previous positions
- test the applicant's knowledge and skills required of the position
  - check knowledge of specific topics
  - ask the applicant to solve several job-related procedures
- obtain information on any specialized knowledge the applicant has and determine whether:
  - the applicant is over-qualified
  - the applicant is well prepared for a different career

Determine whether the applicant has the personal characteristics required for the job

- Know the applicant's aspirations and career goals
- Check the applicant's willingness to accept the responsibilities of the job
- Evaluate whether the applicant is emotionally stable
- Decide whether the applicant would make a loyal employee
- Does the applicant demonstrate ability to learn and develop in your business

Know the financial needs of the applicant and discuss the financial rewards of the position

Ask the applicant how he or she feels about the position, and take note of any comments or complaints

Jot down your impressions of the applicant after the interview

Be ready to make your selection as soon as you have one or more well qualified applicants from which to choose

Immediately schedule a second interview to help hold well qualified candidates

5. *Below is a brief description of an applicant as well as some information she has provided on her application form. She is applying for a position as an assistant manager of a store. What are some of the things you might do to help this particular applicant feel comfortable before you start the actual interview?*

   Jot down a few notes on your thoughts in the blank space below the description.

   The applicant is a tall middle-aged, neatly dressed woman. Currently she is not employed, but is working as a housewife. She received a B.A. in Mathematics from a local university 20 years ago, but married in her senior year and then raised two children. Now that her children are full-time students, she is seeking a career which will add more interest to her life.

RESUME

Name: Tina Jones

Working Experience	Employer	Job
1954-1956 part-time	Medici Restaurant	Waitress
1956-1958 part-time	Alltown High School	Substitute teacher
1958-1959 part-time	Biolabs, Inc.	Bookkeeper's helper
1958-present		Housewife

Education:

Institution	Attended	Major	Yr. Grad.	Degree
Alltown High School	1951-1955	Business	1955	H.S.

Book Answer

5. *Of course, there are many possible ways to help Tina feel more comfortable and relaxed before the interview. Some of these ways are listed below:*

   - *inquire whether she is comfortable and would like a cup of coffee or water, etc.*
   - *commend her on her college achievements*
   - *inquire about her college ambitions*
   - *inquire into specific interests within the Mathematics field*
   - *inquire into the responsibilities and performance which led her to become chairperson of the Applied Mathematics Club during college days*
   - *inquire about other extra-curricular college activities, aside from academics*
   - *inquire about substitute teaching; ask her to tell you about it - whether she enjoyed it, what it was like, how she was able to maintain control over the children, etc.*
   - *inquire into her work as a bookkeeper's helper; ask her to tell you about her duties, whether or not she enjoyed the work and why or why not*
   - *inquire about being a housewife; what kind of reading or interests she developed as a housewife, what her current interests are, what kind of career and job she is seeking*

Phrasing Interview Questions

The real challenge for the interviewer lies in finding out those things that the applicant is reluctant to talk about, so that a clearer picture may be obtained of what that person feels his or her strengths and weaknesses might be.

To encourage an applicant to talk freely, you should practice the use of open questions. Open questions are those which are not easy to answer with a yes, a no, or some other short reply. They are helpful not only in interviewing for selection, but also in speaking with employees who may have a complaint, or in trying to determine how you can help employees perform better.

Open questions can start with:

- o "How do you like..."
- o "What do you think about..."
- o "What would you answer if..."
- o "Could you tell me more about..."

Other useful types of questions would ask applicants to explain a principle in their particular area of expertise, or to provide an overview of a specific problem, or to explain how they would solve a problem.

You may also phrase statements to be like open questions. For instance, statements such as:

- o "Tell me more about your past"
- o "Tell me about your last job and about what you were expected to do"

are very similar to open ended questions. Frequently, the applicant's weaknesses as well as strengths will emerge from such a conversation.

When people are unwilling to speak in response to such statements or questions, it may indicate that a problem exists or that they may have trouble putting their thoughts into words. In either case you can allow some time to pass rather than be disturbed by silence. Silence often indicates that the applicant has something on her or his mind which may be revealed if given a chance to do so.

In order to ask the most appropriate open questions, it pays to carefully review an application and write out a few questions that will get at the core of the applicant's background or knowledge.

6. *On the following page is a portion of a resume. Review it and determine what kinds of open questions might be appropriate to ask the applicant.*

RESUME

Name: James Rodreiquez Phone: 234-5678
Address: P.O. Box 864, Centerville, Anystate

Education	Yrs. Attend.	Yr. Grad.	Major	Degree
Alltown High School Paved Street Centerville, Anystate	1960-1962	1962	English	-

Extra-Curricular Activities: Poetry Club, Tennis Club, Little League Coach, Inter-Varsity Ministry

Experience:

Year	Employer	Position
Summers 1960-1962	Summer camp	Summer camp counselor
1962-1975	BUSY Construction Company	Construction worker
1975-present	Centerville Local News	Proof-reader/paste-up mechanicals

Place a check next to those questions and statements below which are openly phrased and appropriate to ask of the applicant:

1. *Do you like your present job of proof-reading/paste-up?*
2. *What did you teach in summer camp?*
3. *How did you like construction work?*
4. *Tell me more about your work in that office.*
5. *Would you be willing to work weekends?*
6. *Why do you want to leave your present job?*
7. *Why do you seek employment with our business?*
8. *What do you think you may be able to offer or contribute to our firm?*
9. *I see you have worked in construction. Have you ever had any contact with the ABC Construction Company?*
10. *Can you explain to me how a window is installed in a house?*
11. *What kind of work, specifically, would you like to do?*

12. What are your professional ambitions for the future?
13. What salary or pay would you expect?

List in the space below, a few additional open questions which you might ask of the applicant:

Book Answer

6. *Openly phrased questions which would be appropriate to ask of the applicant are checked below:*

___ 1. *Do you like your present job of proof-reading/ paste-up?*
___ 2. *What did you teach in summer camp?*
___ 3. *How did you like construction work?*
✓ 4. *Tell me more about your work in that office.*
___ 5. *Would you be willing to work weekends?*
✓ 6. *Why do you want to leave your present job?*
✓ 7. *Why do you seek employment with our business?*
✓ 8. *What do you think you may be able to offer or contribute to our firm?*
___ 9. *I see you have worked in construction. Have you ever had any contact with the ABC Construction Company?*
✓ 10. *Can you explain to me how a window is installed in a house?*
✓ 11. *What kind of work, specifically, would you like to do?*
✓ 12. *What are your professional ambitions for the future?*
___ 13. *What salary or pay would you expect?*

All other questions are not openly phrased and can be answered by short, uninformative replies.

Other examples of appropriate open questions might include:

- *Exactly what kind of construction work did you do?*
- *Tell me something about yourself.*
- *What did you like and dislike about your past working experiences.*

ON-THE-JOB ACTIVITY 3

Use the interview checklist on page 22 for the next selection interview that you conduct. Based on that interview, improve the checklist. You may wish to add additional items or underline useful items on the list which were not part of your procedure in the past.

If possible, review your conclusions with someone who you feel is knowledgeable in interviewing to see what other ideas such a discussion will bring.

CONFIRMING YOUR IMPRESSIONS

Experienced interviewers agree almost unanimously that they gain considerably greater insight into the potential of an applicant during a second interview several days or possibly weeks after the first one.

Whenever you are filling an important position, it might be worthwhile to screen several applicants and then to call two or three, but certainly one well qualified applicant, back for a second interview before making the decision, and even possibly before checking references. In planning the second interview you already have a lot of information about the applicant and now must decide more specifically what additional information might be useful.

Some people ask applicants to plan to spend several hours at such a second interview and to be prepared to do some work. Some companies pay for such a second interview and then ask the applicant to actually perform some of the tasks that he or she would be expected to do on the job.

Checking References

The final step in the selection procedure is the reference check. References need to be checked only with the one or two applicants best qualified for the job. Since few people will say anything that might hurt a person's chances for a job it is best to contact references on the telephone, or in person if the job is very important and worth the effort. Here, open questions should be used

to bring out the most information about an applicant.

Checking the accuracy of actual information which the applicant has given is generally easy. The reference can be asked what dates the employee worked for the particular oganization, what the salary level was, and what the reasons for separation were.

Usually, it is adequate to speak only with those people whom the applicant listed voluntarily. Asking these people about the candidate's strengths and weaknesses can be useful, because such questions force the person who is giving the reference to provide more specific information and to speak somewhat more freely.

Another device that many interviewers find useful is to speak to people other than the ones who have been given as references. These interviewers ask the references for the names of other people who might have knowledge about the candidate's work and capabilities, and they then question those too.

7. *When should you check references and what are some ways of checking various references?*

   Your Answer:

8. *Under what circumstances is a second interview with an applicant desirable? What is the purpose of a second interview and how should it be conducted?*

   Your Answer:

ON-THE-JOB ACTIVITY 4

Review the checklist below and add or delete items from the list so that it may become a useful checklist to you, the next time you are in a position to check references.

If possible, discuss your thoughts with a person whose opinion you respect and see what additional ideas come from such a discussion.

SUMMARY/CHECKLIST FOR REFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

Request references from the applicant in addition to the ones already provided.

Call the reference, rather than write.

Ask specific questions of the reference rather than general questions.

Ask the reference to describe the candidate's duties.

Ask the reference which duties the applicant performed best.

Ask the reference what he or she felt were the areas in which the applicant was least capable.

Request that the reference furnish you with information regarding other individuals with whom the applicant worked closely.

Book Answer

7. *References should be checked on only the one or two applicants best qualified for the job. The checks should be conducted carefully to bring out additional information about the applicant. Some possible approaches for conducting a reference check are listed in the summary/checklist on page 33.*

Book Answer

8. *A second interview with a job applicant is often desirable when an important position is to be filled.*

   The purpose of the second interview is to gain a better idea of the potential of an applicant.

   The second interview may be conducted by calling back one to three well qualified applicants anywhere from several days to several weeks after the first interview. This second interview should be even more carefully planned than the first one to obtain any information which was found lacking in the first interview. Frequently, the second interview is used to test the applicant's skills. The applicant may be asked to perform some of the tasks he or she would be expected to perform on the job.

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